

**Listing of the Claims**

1. (Currently Amended)            A monitoring system for dark-field imaging of a target area below a surface of an object, the monitoring system including
  - an illumination optical system ~~(31)~~ to emit an illumination beam along an illumination beam path onto the object and
  - an imaging system ~~(35)~~ to receive a returning imaging beam from the target area along an imaging beam path, wherein
  - the imaging system includes a selective optical interception system ~~(32,37,51,52)~~ to intercept a returning illumination beam from the region between the surface and the target area.
  
2. (Original)                    A monitoring system as claimed in Claim 1, wherein
  - the illumination system is arranged to produce the illumination beam as a polarised illumination beam and
  - the selective optical interception system includes a polarisation-analyser having its axis crossed relative to the polarisation axis of the polarised illumination beam.
  
3. (Original)                    A monitoring system as claimed in Claim 1, wherein the selective optical interception system includes an aperture stop that essentially intercepts a central portion of the returning imaging beam.
  
4. (Original)                    A monitoring system for dark-field imaging of a target area below a surface of an object, the monitoring system including
  - an illumination optical system to emit an illumination beam along an illumination beam path onto the object and
  - an imaging system to receive a returning imaging beam from the target area along an imaging beam path, wherein
  - the illumination optical system produces an unfocussed illumination beam.

5. (Original)                    A monitoring system for dark-field imaging of a target area below a surface of an object, the monitoring system including

- an illumination optical system to emit an illumination beam along an illumination beam path onto the object and
- an imaging system to receive a returning imaging beam from the target area along an imaging beam path, wherein
- the illumination beam path and the imaging beam path subtend an angle and
- the illumination optical system has an illumination focus,
- the imaging system has an imaging focus and
- the illumination focus being displaced from the imaging focus.

6. (Currently Amended)                    An analysis apparatus comprising

- a spectroscopy system that includes
  - an excitation system ~~(1)~~ to emit an excitation beam to a target area below a surface of an object and
  - the analysis apparatus further comprising a monitoring system ~~(31,35)~~ to image the target area, the monitoring system including
  - a illumination optical system ~~(31)~~ to emit an illumination beam along an illumination beam path onto the object and
  - an imaging system ~~(35)~~ to receive a returning imaging beam from the target area along an imaging beam path, wherein
  - the illumination beam path and the imaging beam path subtend an angle.

7. (Currently Amended)                    An analysis apparatus comprising a spectroscopy system that includes

- an excitation system to emit an excitation beam to a target area below a surface of an object and

the analysis apparatus further comprising a monitoring system as claimed in ~~any one of~~ Claims 1 ~~to 5~~.